



Tree Trimming Program

Guidelines

Did you know?

that the City owns over **200,000** street trees?



The City strives to keep these trees healthy!

Why does the City trim trees?

An important part of the City's urban forest management plan is tree trimming. The city trims trees for more reasons than you may think:

- Life cycle trimming to promote good health;
- Insect and disease control;
- Removal of potential safety hazards;
- Vehicle and pedestrian clearances as identified by regulations;
- Reduce storm damage from high winds, snow, and freezing rain;
- Clearances for streetlights, buildings, and utilities.

When and how are City trees trimmed?

The City trims its trees routinely as determined by species, age and, in some cases, location. The tree trimming program happens on a year round basis using specific methods of pruning to create healthy, safe, and attractive trees. The various types of pruning can be described as follows:

- **Crown cleaning** is the removal of dead, dying, diseased, crowded, weakly attached and low-vigor branches from the crown of a tree.
- **Crown thinning** is the selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement through the crown. Thinning opens the foliage of a tree, reduces weight on heavy limbs, reduces water intake, and helps retain the tree's natural shape.
- **Crown raising** removes the lower branches from a tree in order to provide clearance for buildings, vehicles, pedestrians and sight lines.
- **Crown reduction** reduces the size of a tree, often for clearance of utility lines. Reducing the height or spread of a tree is best accomplished by pruning back the leaders and branch terminals to lateral branches that are large enough to assume the terminal roles. This method maintains the form and structural integrity of the tree.
- **Crown restoration** removes damaged limbs to restore an appropriate stable form to the tree. This is often necessary following storm damage.

Why does the tree look so different after trimming?

After being trimmed, a tree might look rather bare. Don't worry, it will begin to look normal during the next growing season with a healthier and more attractive form and structure.

Will the City trim my trees?

The City will only trim trees on City property, such as the City owned portion of the roadway (road allowance) in front and at the side of residential lots and City parks.

You can help a City tree by:

- Watering the tree during dry spells (see the City's Fact Sheet on "*Watering Your Tree*");
- Monitoring the tree's condition and reporting to the City any disease, damage or infestations;
- Limiting construction within the Critical Root Zone. This is established as 10 centimetres away from the trunk for every centimetre of trunk diameter. (see the City of Ottawa's "*Tree Protection Guidelines*" brochure)
- Remembering that many herbicides or weed killers that are used on grass can cause severe damage to trees when misapplied. This can occur on windy days, causing the drift to fall on non-target plants, or on hot days when the herbicide may vaporize and diffuse into the air. While most herbicides do not kill tree roots, some chemicals, such as soil sterilants, will have a detrimental effect on growth. Herbicides that can cause tree damage should have statements on their labels warning against using the product near trees.

The property values of landscaped homes are 5-20% higher than those without plant material. Proper trimming of the City tree in front of your home is not only beneficial to the tree but, contributes to the beauty and value of your property.

For more information on the City's Tree Trimming Program, please contact: